DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 233 737 IR 050 390

AUTHOR	Bundy, Alan L.
TITLE	Amalgamations and Libraries. A Study of the Effect on British Polytechnic Libraries of Institutional Amalgamations with Derived Guidelines for Amalgamating Victorian and Other Australian Institutions. Occasional Publication Number 3.
INSTITUTION	Footscray Inst. of Technology (Australia). Library.
REPORT NO	ISBN-0-908533-225
PUB DATE	Nov 81
NOTE	62p.; Best copy available.
AVAILABLE FROM	Administration Unit, Footscray Institute of Technology Library, PO Box 64, Footscray, Victoria, Australia 3011 (Payment must accompany order, Aus $5.00, Aus $6.00 for overseas orders).
PUB TYPE	Viewpoints (120) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Academic Libraries; College Administration; *Consolidated Schools; Foreign Countries; Guidelines; *Library Administration; Library Planning; Library Services; *Mergers; *Multicampus Colleges; Postsecondary Education
IDENTIFIERS	*Australia; *Great Britain; Polytechnics

ABSTRACT

Because 30 Australian colleges of advanced education, principally teacher training institutions, were scheduled to be amalgamated in 1982, a study was undertaken to determine the problems likely to face librarians at these institutions and to produce guidelines on amalgamation and running multi-site operations for both college administrators and librarians. The guidelines developed were primarily based on (1) information on related experiences at British polytechnic libraries, collected during 12 site visits in October 1981; (2) the writings of W. Ashworth, the major author in this area of librarianship; and (3) comments received from Australian librarians with experience of amalgamations and multi-site operations. In addition to the guidelines, this document presents a statement of the rationale for Australian amalgamations; a discussion of the study's background, scope, and methodology; a description of the Australian and British experience with amalgamations; a review of the literature on the management dilemmas inherent in amalgamation situations; a delineation of the problems and advantages of multi-site libraries; a statement of conclusions and recommendations based on the study; and an extensive review of comments received on the guidelines for administrators and librarians. A 10-item bibliography and information about the author are also provided. (ESR)

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AMALGAMATIONS AND LIBRARIES

A STUDY OF THE EFFECT ON BRITISH POLYTECHNIC LIBRARIES OF INSTITUTIONAL AMALGAMATIONS WITH DERIVED GUIDELINES FOR AMALGAMATING VICTORIAN AND OTHER AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTIONS.

A.L. BUNDY

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Occasional Publication Number 3
November 1981

National Library of Australia cataloguing-in-publication data.

Bundy, Alan L. (Alan Lindsey), 1943 —.

AMALGAMATIONS AND LIBRARIES
A study of the effect on British polytechnic libraries of institutional amalgamations, with derived guidelines for amalgamating Victorian and other Australian institutions.

Bibliography.
ISBN 0 908533 225.

1. Libraries, University and college — Great Britain.
I. Footscray Institute of Technology. Library.
II. Title. (Series: Occasional publication Footscray Institute of Technology. Library); no.3).

027.7

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ABSTRACT

In 1982 thirty Australian colleges of advanced education, principally teacher-training institutions, will be amalgamating. The study, undertaken with the support of the Victorian Post-Secondary Education Commission, considers the problems likely to face the libraries of those institutions because of amalgamations and multi-site operation. The author, a librarian, visited British polytechnic libraries in October 1981, and has produced guidelines for administrators and librarians of Australian colleges derived from the substantial polytechnic experience of amalgamations and multi-site operation.

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Preface

This report is intended to assist the administrators and librarians of amalgamating Victorian and other Australian colleges of advanced education.

In particular it is intended:

- To stimulate an awareness of the need for considered decision— making about library services, despite the pressures facing administrators and librarians in colleges which may be amalgamating very quickly and with reduced funding.
- To provide pragmatic guidelines for the implementation of those decisions.

Libraries require a significant percentage of college recurrent budgets even to maintain the present often unsatisfactory level of resources and services. They are a substantial investment for colleges. It is important that this investment, in the interests of teaching programmes and students, is protected as fully as possible.

The capacity of libraries to provide resources and services can be affected more by amalgamation than any other single element in colleges. It is a matter of the greatest consequence to students. This point will not be lost on those students who will be affected by amalgamations, and whose voice will undoubtedly become more strident if libraries in amalgamated colleges deteriorate or disappear.

The Australian Union of Students has already noted in its special national newspaper, September 1981.

"When 4 campuses join together to become a multi-purpose campus it is unlikely that they will each maintain their separate libraries... The results are that facilities such as libraries which have been built up over years will now be dismantled, the buildings made useless..."

Whilst this possibly exaggerates what will actually occur in most amalgamated colleges, it would be unfortunate if decisions made from ignorance of the consequences affect the capacity of college libraries to provide the resources and services on which teaching programmes and students depend. The experience of the British polytechnic libraries with amalgamations and multi-site operations is the most recent and relevant for Australian College of Advanced Education libraries. It would be foolish not to benefit from that experience.

A number of the following guidelines derived from that experience will appear to be commonsense, unnecessarily stated or presumptious. In the amalgamation-trauma facing a number of colleges in 1982 and beyond, even the obvious warrants iteration. Nothing, from a library viewpoint, can be presumed.

A.L. Bundy
November 1981

CONTENTS

	Page
Australian amalgamations : the rationale	I
Acknowledgements	II
Guidelines for college administrators	III
Guidelines for college librarians	IV
Background to study	1
Scope of study	1
Introduction	4
Amalgamations : the Australian experience	4
Amalgamations : the British experience	11
The polytechnic library experience	12
The management dilemma	13
Problems of multi-site libraries	19
Advantages of multi-site libraries	23
Conclusions	26
Recommendations	28
Commentary on guidelines	30
Bibliography	52

Through its Chairman Dr. Graeme Allen, the Victorian Post-Secondary Education Commission supported this study as a contribution to an understanding of the problems facing amalgamating institutions throughout Australia.
The content of the following report of the study does not however represent a VPSEC viewpoint or policy.

AUSTRALIAN AMALGAMATIONS : THE RATIONALE

Commonwealth Minister for Education, The Honourable Wal Fife MP from the transcript of Beanland Lecture, Footscray Institute of Technology, Melbourne 28 September 1981.

"In what is, therefore a perceived need to provide for more efficient use of available resources in the area of education, the Government's views have taken account of the declining enrolment in pre-service teacher education, and of the requirement to maintain viable institutions. It is important to realise that the options chosen by the Government will ensure the continued availability of higher education courses throughout the country. Its decisions on the consolidation of certain colleges of advanced education are a consequence.

In making these decisions, the Government had regard to the views of its advisory body, the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission, which had been considering, in consultation with State authorities, the implications for universities and colleges of advanced education of what was a substantial and continuing decline in teacher education enrolments. The CTEC, in February this year, expressed support for a major re-direction of effort in advanced education from teacher education to the technologies and business studies. As part of this process, the CTEC proposed that institutions which are concerned predominantly with teacher education should be incorporated into multi-purpose or multi-campus colleges of advanced education or integrated into neighbouring universities.

This involved the consolidation into large units of thirty colleges of advanced education (and here, it should be noted, the Government does not intend that constituent institutions should close, but rather that there be genuine amalgamations, with one governing body, and a real saving of resources); the re-direction of effort in advanced education from teacher education to the technologies and business studies, in keeping with long-term national interests that have already been examined, and the associated ear-marking of funds for this purpose; and a re-allocation of resources to occur in and between universities as necessary."

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Appreciation is extended to:

- Dr G Allen, chairman of VPSEC for his interest and support.
- The Victorian Post-Secondary Education Commission for its financial assistance.
- Mr W Richardson, Chairman of the VPSEC Advisory Committee on Libraries, and other members of the committee Mr D Pownall, Mr D Schauder and Mr C Tolley for their support.
- Mr D Mills, Director, and Dr I Herrman, Assistant Director, Footscray Institute of Technology for their support and for special leave to undertake the study.
- Professor W Ashworth, formerly Librarian of the Polytechnic of Central London, for his counsel.
- The Chief Librarians, senior library staff and administrators of the polytechnics who gave so generously of their time during my visits, in particular.

Mr M Collier	Central London
Mr J Cowley	Middlesex
Mr S Eagle	Thames
Dr J Earle	Sheffield City
Mr G Ewins	Wales
Mr J Hartas	Bristol
Mr D House	Brighton
Mr D Jackson	Portsmouth
Mr P Jackson	Oxford
Mr P Jordan	Manchester
Mr D Lewis	Sheffield City
Mr N McLean	Central London
Mr M Maxim	Manchester
Mr P Plumb	North East London
Mr D Revill	Liverpool
Mr I Rogerson	Manchester

- The other librarians who replied, often in considerable depth, to enquiries about amalgamations.
- Australian librarians involved in amalgamations and multi-site operations for their helpful comments, in particular

Miss M Cameron	Deakin University
Mr R Cotsell	Lincoln Institute of Health Sciences
Ms P Cook	North Brisbane College of Advanced Education
Ms F Love	Alexander Mackie College of Advanced Education
Mr B Mitcheson	Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology

GUIDELINES FOR COLLEGE ADMINISTRATORS

* Libraries and librarians have a strong tradition of co-operation. They are likely to be ahead of other parts of your college in their willingness to integrate and will have a broader perspective of the new institution than individual academic areas. The library is a tangible and visible way of helping you establish a corporate identity for your new college.

* Early investment in the integration of the libraries will not only assist in the development of your new institution's corporate identity, it is also likely to save additional costs in the long-term.

* Appoint a Chief Librarian with senior academic status, ex officio membership of the academic board and other significant committees, and the closest involvement in overall institutional planning, *as a priority*. Someone will have to make hard decisions and lead — a committee of your inherited site librarians will not and cannot.

* Particularly where several colleges are amalgamating an internal appointment as Chief Librarian should be avoided. The position requires a new perspective and dynamic — appoint from *outside* if at all possible despite your funding problems.

* Resist any temptation to use an academic — redundant or otherwise — as a direct supervisor over the site librarians you have inherited. It is unlikely to be successful or save money in the long-term.

* Establish a small college library committee that is advisory to your Chief Librarian and reports to the Academic Board and is so constituted as to minimise inter departmental and intersite rivalry. Do not retain or allow to be established strong site library committees — they are a potential source of tension between site and site and centre, which will not help you estabish a corporate identity for your institution.

* Multi-site libraries are *at least* 5% per site library more expensive than physically consolidated libraries. Staffing will be the main additional cost. There will also be higher resource and equipment costs. If a site can be closed, do not overlook the advantage to the library and your budget.

* Removing a proportion of students, staff and resources from one site does not result in proportionate savings in library operations. Each site library needs a certain minimum of staff to provide services and access.

* If you are considering moving the teaching courses around in your institution it has library implications. Books are expensive to duplicate or transfer; catalogue records require considerable staff, time and money to change in a computerised system.

* Apart from large transfers of books, the library will need frequent and reliable transport between sites for interlibrary loans etc.

* The allocation of funds and selection of resources is the responsibility of your Chief Librarian. Do not let the library become a battleground for funds between teaching staff representing the interests of a different sites.

* Allow your Chief Librarian to move funds between acquisitions, equipment and staff, particularly during the early stages of amalgamation when college funds may be unable to support adequate acquisitions, services, systems development and staffing. There is no point in buying a large number of books if there is no provision for staff and systems development to process and catalogue them. Your Chief Librarian may need any flexibility you can give in the deployment of funds.

GUIDELINES FOR COLLEGE LIBRARIANS

* Read T. Burns and G. Stalker *The Management of Innovation*, particularly Chapters 2 and 6, and W. Ashworth *Organising multi-site libraries*.
* Ensure that there has been discussion between comparable staff from the amalgamating libraries before integrations is commenced. This should remove confusion and suspicion, and clarify approaches to major issues such as staffing and budgeting.
* Undertake a comprehensive appraisal of the staff, stock and accommodation of the libraries to be amalgamated. Create a data base for planning decisions. Match these against academic development plans (also often under radical change at the time of amalgamations) and identify problem areas.
* Give staff the earliest possible information on their place/role in the new college, and on how that place will be determined. Long periods of uncertainty sap morale.
* You will need a new staff-structure — have it adopted as soon as possible. Do not promote anyone until it is satisfactory.
* Establish inter-site working parties consisting of *all* levels of staff.
* Document carefully any special arrangements for resource and service provision on particular sites — you may need the evidence later.
* Site library user committees may be valuable during the first stages to counteract at the local level misunderstandings and misapprehensions.
* You will probably ultimately centralise most technical services for economic reasons.

* Promote a formal staff development programme as a priority, despite your time and funding constraints.
* Establish a training advisory group with members for all sites, including non-professional staff.
* Encourage establishment of peer groups with similar interests within the library system.
* The new larger library has greater scope to undertake professional initiatives such as special collections, seminars, publications and projects that will help consolidate the college and the library's corporate identity. Do not defer them because of your early organisational and funding problems.
* Do not overlook the psychological impact on users and library staff of those tangible aspects that will declare the corporate nature of the new library. Examples can be as cheap as a common library-guide or as expensive as a shared automated loans system.
* Involve the whole library in an automated cataloguing system with fiche or online catalogues as soon as possible. This will facilitate the transfer between sites of book-stocks as well as helping the library's corporate identity.
* Introduce standard loans, penalties, procedures between sites as far as possible and as quickly as possible.
* Allow all users immediate borrowing access to all sites, even at the risk of overloading a particular site.
* Avoid any reduction in hours and services on individual sites during the first stage of amalgamation. Such reductions can only provide ammunition for disenchanged academics and make the life of the Directorate of the College even harder. The library may be in the firing line for no other reason than that it is tangible as a release mechanism for staff resentful about amalgamation.
* To ensure the maintenance of services you will need staffing reserves in the system. Your site will not have the same capacity as when they were autonomous to allow for sickness and other absences.
* In addition to the necessary transfers to cover absences, get as many staff as possible to share time between sites. New staff should spend time at each library. It will help corporate identity.
* Be mobile — visit sites regularly and frequently. Let all staff, senior and junior, see that you are available for discussion of problems.
* Selection of resources for a site should be the prerogative of site or subject specialist library staff. However, someone needs to overview the acquisition procedure of the entire library to avoid expensive duplication.
* The individual site libraries may have impressive stock figures, but probably have not been edited rigorously for the rubbish, the irrelevant and the duplication they acquired during affluent times. Establish a systematic weeding programme to minimise space problems, catalogue conversion and transfer problems.

* Do use all the conventional forms of communication such as staff meetings, regular and frequent newsletters, inter-site working parties, social events.
* Unity in your new library is ultimately likely to depend on the will of your staff to behave in a professional way. This requires a flexible approach from those staff. This concept will not be easily grasped by all. Your role is to lead them to it.

BACKGROUND TO STUDY

The author is a member of the Advisory Committee on Libraries of the Victorian Post-Secondary Education Commission (VPSEC), a commission established in 1980 to coordinate the development of post-secondary education in the State of Victoria, Australia.

At the first meeting of the Advisory Committee in July 1981 a major item of discussion was the effect on the library services of a number of colleges, particularly teacher-training colleges, that were required because of Federal Government policy to amalgamate at the beginning of 1982 with no time for detailed consideration of all the problems and consequences of such amalgamations.

During this discussion note was made of the author's 1976 study-tour of British Polytechnic libraries, where he had observed the impact on library services of college amalgamations in the United Kingdom.[1]

The Committee decided to take advantage of the author's visit to Europe on other professional business in October 1981, and through the Chairman, Mr W D Richardson requested VPSEC to support a short updating study of the polytechnic libraries with the expectation that pragmatic guidelines to assist Victorian and other Australian amalgamating institutions could be produced before the end of 1981.

SCOPE OF STUDY

This study assesses the effect of amalgamations and multi-site operations on British polytechnic libraries. Time permitted visits to only 12 of the polytechnics most affected by amalgamations, with the rest covered by postal survey. Discussions were also held with a number of the participants at the 1981 annual conference in Chichester of COPOL - the Committee of Polytechnic Librarians, to which the author was kindly invited by the COPOL President Mr D L Lewis.

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1 A.L. BUNDY "Lessons for Australia : a polytechnic profile" The Australian Library Journal Feb 1978 pp23-30

This study does not claim to be a definitive study, particularly as the situation in the polytechnics is still evolving. The author does intend undertaking a more thorough study of polytechnics during the second half of 1982, concentrating on the staffing aspects of multi-site libraries.

VALIDITY OF STUDY

This study was conducted at very short notice and within severe time-constraints. Despite these factors it is not considered that they in any way qualify the validity of the enumerated guidelines.

The guidelines are based on

* a concensus from the reports of the polytechnic libraries
* the author's own extensive knowledge of Australian and British college libraries
* the findings of the major writer in this area of librarianship, Professor W Ashworth, formerly librarian of the Polytechnic of Central London and a number of other writers
* comments received from Australian librarians with experience of amalgamations and multi-site operations.

METHODOLOGY

In mid-August 1981 a letter was sent to all polytechnic libraries asking them to indicate briefly if the effect of amalgamations had been, or was still, a major factor in the provision of library-services.

From the responses a selection was made of polytechnics to be visited. The extent of incorporation of teacher-training institutions was an element in this selection, due to the emphasis on teacher-training colleges in Australian amalgamations.

A draft list of guidelines derived mainly from the literature was mailed, with a request for comment, to those polytechnics not visited. This list also formed the basis for discussions with the polytechnics visited in the second-half of October 1981.

The author also spoke with Professor W Ashworth in London.

In an attempt to determine if there had been any relevant experience gained in previous Australian amalgamations (but not documented), a letter was also sent to the librarians of colleges involved in those amalgamations and multi-site operations, and the librarian of Deakin University in Victoria. This university was established in April 1977 with a base of a multi-discipline college of advanced education and a teachers' college.

INTRODUCTION

In 1976 this writer, after a study-tour of polytechnic libraries, concluded, in an article published in the Australian Library Journal that *"The most significant observation that can be made about the operation of the polytechnic libraries is how much their services, procedures, staffing and funding are affected by their multi-site operation. It is clear that economic operation and improved management and services will not be achieved until the libraries are physically consolidated. As Professor Wilfred Ashworth (Chief Librarian of the Polytechnic of Central London) states in his booklet Organizing multi-site libraries 'Multi-sitis is a serious complaint with no complete cure other than drastic, complete surgery'. The Partridge, Williams and other sundry committees currently investigating post-secondary education in Australia should not lose sight of this factor in their deliberations.*
The thin slicing of the tertiary educational cake in Australia is caused by college-sitis which will not necessarily be eliminated by the organisational amalgamation of existing colleges. Real improvement can only be achieved by a reduction in the number of college sites and hence a reduction in the number of libraries. Such a reduction should result in a greater ability by Australian CAE libraries to deliver the goods - something which a reading of the Wainwright Report confirms they have, to date, conspicuously failed to do"[2]

AMALGAMATIONS : THE AUSTRALIAN EXPERIENCE

In 1982 a significant number of amalgamations will occur in Australia. However, particularly since 1976, there has already been a small reduction in the number of colleges and sites through amalgamation.

The majority of amalgamations have occurred in country areas, where it became clear that the development of a multi-discipline college of advanced education and a teachers'college adjacent to each other was politically, economically and educationally difficult to sustain.

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2 Ibid p.30

These amalgamations have included

* in Victoria, the amalgamation of two colleges in Ballarat, two in Bendigo, two in Geelong incorporated in the new Deakin University, and in Melbourne the incorporation of the College of Nursing in the Lincoln Institute of Health Sciences. Unusually, Victoria has also developed combined Advanced Education and Technical and Further Education Colleges such as Swinburne Ltd, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology Ltd and Caulfield Institute of Technology. Some of these have separate TAFE campuses and libraries and present some problems in cost-effective library-provision

* in South Australia that of the Adelaide College of Education with the Torrens College of Advanced Education, and Kingston College with the Murray Park College

* in Tasmania the closure in December 1980 of the southern campus of the two campus Tasmanian College of Advanced Education

* in Queensland the incorporation within the Queensland Institute of Technology of the College of Nursing

* in New South Wales the amalgamation of the Good Samaritan Teachers College and the Catholic College of Education. The College of Law is now also part of Kuring-gai College of Advanced Education

* in Western Australia the closure in 1979 of the Graylands Teachers' College and the dispersal of its library, and the much earlier incorporation within the Western Australian Institute of Technology of the Muresk Agricultural College, the Kalgoorlie School of Mines, the Kindergarten Teachers' College and the School of Occupational Health

There has thus been for several years a process of consolidation and rationalisation in Australia which has not excited the same interest as the forthcoming amalgamations precipitated by the decision of the Federal Government to cease funding 30 colleges if they do not amalgamate by 1982. Wal Fife, the Commonwealth Minister for Education, referred to this process in his statement *"The Government's decisions on consolidation in the advanced education sector are consistent with action already being taken by the States.*

The initiatives undertaken over a considerable period... in N.S.W., S.A. and Tasmania are especially noteworthy" [3]

Of the amalgamations and incorporations that have been completed before 1981, from a library viewpoint, two things are significant.

* None of them has resulted in the retention of more than two libraries, with the exception of the large Western Australian Institute of Technology, where the libraries that have been retained are specialist branch libraries rather than site libraries with comprehensive collections servicing large student numbers

* a number have been planned on the basis of site closures, reducing to one the number of library-sites needed

The past experience in Australia of amalgamations, is not therefore generally similar to the large metropolitan amalgamations that will occur from 1982 and which will result in permanent multi-site libraries servicing similar academic courses.

Despite this, more accounts of the consequences of those amalgamations for libraries would have been useful. The considerable experience in South Australia of metropolitan amalgamations would have been particularly relevant. However, one aspect of multi-site operation is referred to in the 1980 Annual Report of the Adelaide College of the Arts and Education Library in the observation that *"Increasing pressures on space and the transfer of materials between campuses have required the examination of sections of the collection resulting in the removal of outdated and unnecessary duplicate items"* Regrettably, the following comment by the editor of the Newsletter of the Association of Librarians of Colleges of Advanced Education (ALCAE) in the December 1980 issue, is almost as valid in November 1981 as it was a year ago

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3 Beanland Lecture, Footscray Institute of Technology September 1981 p.7

"The effect of amalgamations on college libraries in Australia has not yet been systematically studied and consequently not published. However, as a first step, even a small number of well documented case studies of the affected libraries would be valuable particularly for those libraries that live under the real or potential threat of being absorbed by another institution and to students of library administration in general"

The publication in Australian Academic and Research Libraries September 1981 of two directly relevant articles marks a move in the direction sought in the above statement. They reinforce comments about the effects of amalgamations and multi-site operations made in a more general article published in 1978 in the same journal by M. Cameron, Chief Librarian, Deakin University. In her article, Cameron states *inter alia*

"Amalgamation is inevitably a difficult experience... Deakin started with five sites... This dispersion of the university library has obvious implications for operating costs"[4]

Cameron, in correspondence with the writer, stresses the problems of staff relationships in amalgamating institutions and "the very time consuming problem of rationalising serial subscriptions".

In the two recent and very useful articles in Australian Academic and Research Libraries similar themes emerge which are referred to later in this report. It is sufficient in the context of this section to include a general comment from each article.

D. Waters, University of Tasmania writes

"Typically when governments change direction in education, the effect upon libraries is not a primary consideration... From the foregoing it will be clear that the rationalisation of tertiary education in Tasmania has had a significant impact on the University of Tasmania library. Countless manhours have been occupied in discussions and planning over the last 18 months... Such hidden costs are, of course, never catered for by the architects of such amalgamations. Nor, indeed, are the more obvious costs of identifying, reprocessing and transferring

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4 M. Cameron "Deakin is different" Australian Academic and Research Libraries Dec.1978 p.194

library collections... One can only hope that libraries involved in future amalgamations will be able to convince the powers-that-be of the magnitude of such a project and its likely costs, but is more likely that they will not want to know"[5]

In identical vein C. Tweedie, Prahran College of Advanced Education, writes

"Experience in the past twelve months at Prahran College of Advanced Education has shown that when, as part of a college merger, staff, students and courses are transferred from one campus to another, the transfer of library stock to support such courses is far from being a minor and incidental aspect of the operation. On the contrary, even with the most careful management, it may emerge as a most disruptive and expensive exercise. It is important, then, that the committees charged with planning the relocation of courses in multi-campus institutions should from the outset take library considerations into account as a major factor in these decisions"[6]

There is thus some evidence of a greater interest in the effect on libraries of institutional amalgamations, and it is to be hoped that this will be consolidated by the Tertiary Education Commission-funded "Evaluative study of the amalgamation of colleges at Ballarat and Bendigo" commenced 1 July 1981 by the Centre for the Study of Higher Education, University of Melbourne.

This study, under the direction of Professor D. Beswick, is at the time of writing in its very early stages. It is uncertain how closely the effect on libraries will be evaluated, but the VPSEC Advisory Committee on Libraries, through its Chairman, is endeavouring to ensure that this aspect is not neglected.

In addition to the articles mentioned, there has been some reporting of the problems of branch library operations in Australian universities. That invaluable journal Australian Academic and Research Libraries contains three articles on this topic in its March 1981 issue; articles which highlight the staffing and communication aspects of physically-separated libraries that will inevitably be of concern in multi-site college libraries.

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5 D. Waters "Problems of merging libraries" Australian Academic and Research Libraries Sept 1981 p.173

6 C. Tweedie "Transfer of library resources among merging institutions" Australian Academic and Research Libraries Sept 1981 p.162

There is no doubt that Australian college librarians have some sensitivity to the effect of amalgamations on library-services. For example, in referring to pre-amalgamation co-operation between the Prahran College of Advanced Education and Toorak State College, C. Awcock, Chief Librarian of the latter college commented

"Future planning by the Joint Academic Committee should endeavour to avoid the mistake of underestimating the total library needs to service the new academic concept"[7]

Similarly G. Kosa comments, in a positive manner, in the editorial of the October 1981 issue of the ALCAE Newsletter

"Amalgamations remain in the centre of interest of librarians in at least half of the colleges in this country. For many of the newly created institutions planning is already reaching a critical stage when the administrative structure of the new colleges, and the place of the library within them is being determined. This is an excellent opportunity for ensuring that the chief librarian of these new institutions should have direct access to the chief executive or to his deputy and that these librarians should be on the main policy making committees such as academic board, finance, staffing and academic planning.

There are many major problems to be solved such as the relationship between the library and audio visual services, the delineation of responsibility of the library to the central and campus administrations, and the centralization of technical services. The challenge is there, it is up to us to make the best of the opportunities " [8]

However, whilst it can be assumed that librarians in Australian amalgamating institutions have some awareness of the problems and costs of amalgamations for libraries, as much cannot be assumed of the chief administrators of the new institutions, most of whom at the time of writing have yet to be appointed.

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7 ALCAE Newsletter, Dec.1980 p.11

FORTHCOMING AUSTRALIAN AMALGAMATIONS

The following amalgamations seem likely to occur from the beginning of 1982, with several others, principally involving small specialist colleges possibly to occur within the next few years. Figures in brackets are approximate number of monographs in each library.[8]

* in Victoria, the amalgamation of Burwood State College (92,000), Rusden State College (74,000), Toorak State College (82,000) and Prahran College of Advanced Education (53,000). Frankston State College (85,000) will merge with Caulfield Institute of Technology (124,000) and Preston Institute of Technology (45,000) with Coburg State College (67,000)

* in South Australia the twin campus Adelaide College of the Arts and Education (288,000) is amalgamating with the Hartley (111,000), Salisbury (65,000) and Sturt (77,000) colleges

* in New South Wales the Sydney (multi-campus 185,000), Kindergarten (50,000), Nursery School (19,000) and Guild Teachers' colleges (18,000) will amalgamate with Alexander Mackie (twin campus 75,000) and Nepean Colleges of Advanced Education (twin campus 65,000). The twin campus Polding College (66,000) will amalgamate with Catholic Teachers' College (36,000) and the Mount St Mary College (17,000)

* in Queensland the North Brisbane (58,000), Mt Gravatt (80,000), Kelvin Grove (102,000) and Kindergarten (27,000) colleges will amalgamate, with the possibility of the closure of the latter college

* in Western Australia the Nedlands (55,000), Churchlands (56,000), and Mt Lawley (55,000) and Claremont (60,000) colleges will amalgamate, with the possibility of the closure of the latter college

In addition to the amalgamations of metropolitan colleges, it appears that the Townsville College of Advanced Education (53,000) will merge with James Cook University in Queensland (143,000). The Newcastle College of Advanced Education (100,000) will merge with the University of Newcastle, N.S.W. (312,000), and the Wollongong Institute of Education (54,000) will merge with the University of Wollongong, N.S.W. (132,000). There is also, at the time of writing, a possibility that Melbourne State College (358,000) will become part of the adjacent University of Melbourne (694,000).

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8 Taken from Directory of Australian Academic Libraries 2nd ed 1981

The forthcoming amalgamations of metropolitan colleges are particularly significant because

* they involve more individual institutions in each amalgamation than in previous Australian amalgamations
* they involve campuses which are in many cases a considerable distance from each other
* they often involve colleges of equal size and status which have well developed libraries serving similar courses
* it is not likely that the amalgamations will result in the rapid closure of many individual sites
* a number of the amalgamated colleges will operate permanently from several sites
* they involve in several cases an amalgamation of teacher-training and multi-discipline institutions

In these elements there are considerable parallels with the British experience of the last decade.

AMALGAMATIONS : The British Experience

In the British system of higher education the polytechnics are a counter balance to the universities, a concept first defined in a 1966 White Paper entitled *A plan for Polytechnics and other colleges*. They are thus essentially the British equivalent of the degree-awarding Australian multi-discipline College of Advanced Education, which is usually called an Institute of Technology.

In Britain the amalgamation of existing colleges of commerce, technology, art and design commenced in 1969 to create a total of 31 regional polytechnics, although the location of these polytechnics throughout the United Kingdom is far from balanced and truly regional. Since then many of the polytechnics have also incorporated teacher-training institutions as the demand for teachers has declined, a situation that is now occurring in Australia.

As with the development of the Australian binary tertiary education system which is of similar vintage, the British intention was to create a separate but equal sector of higher education with an emphasis on vocationally orientated, interdisciplinary courses.

Due to the rapid decline of teacher education and the general state of the British economy the amalgamation of colleges in Britain has been more severe and extreme than anything that will be experienced in Australia until 1982.

It is clear that many of the college amalgamations in Britain have had as little educational and geographic rationale behind them as some of the forthcoming Australian amalgamations. To say that there has been considerable local resistance to them at the academic and in some cases the library level is an understatement, although in recent years declining teachers' colleges have been happier to accept amalgamation with a polytechnic,as the alternative has often been complete closure. Certainly there is no indication that the impact on library-services played any part in decisions about the amalgamations that occurred, despite the fact that libraries are a major cost-element in academic institutions.

To expect as much is obviously, but unfortunately, naive. The task of the polytechnic librarians has thus been essentially one of devising the best form of library-service within difficult funding, staffing, accommodation and locational constraints.

As D. Davinson observed in 1970

Some polytechnics... are formed from colleges many miles apart... With little chance of achieving consolidation on one site for many, many years,their difficulties in providing coherent library service will be truly formidable" [9]

THE POLYTECHNIC LIBRARY EXPERIENCE

In responding to these dilemmas the polytechnic librarians as a corpus have accumulated a wealth of experience and opinion, some of which has been documented.

Writers such as Ashworth, Bagley, Bateman, Harris, and Revill have all drawn attention to the consequences for libraries of amalgamations and the managerial, staffing, resources and cost implications of multi-site operation.

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9 D. Davinson "Polytechnic library perspectives" Library World May 1970 p.324

It is appropriate to quote from them at some length, particularly from Professor W. Ashworth who made a special study of multi-site academic library problems during his time as Chief Librarian of the Polytechnic of Central London.

The core of the amalgamation problem, not just for libraries, is however put most directly by Professor K. Harris, Librarian of Newcastle-upon-Tyne Polytechnic. Writing in 1971 he said

"..... the polytechnics have usually risen from an amalgamation of colleges of technology, art, commerce and, occasionally of education. A result is that many polytechnics are cursed with split sites and as one wanders around Bristol or Portsmouth, it is easy to understand the problems of fragmentation. There is a lack of cohesion because of the immense difficulties of effective integration. Libraries probably suffer most having to duplicate all sorts of services, to employ extra staff, to buy additional books, and to make time-consuming selection decisions.

The result of all the shotgun marriages, without the option of divorce, is that people with different backgrounds have been brought together and sometimes for the first time in their existence are speaking to each other. Understanding is not always easy and many staff in polytechnics, still loyal to their old origins, think in terms of strangers in other camps when they mean colleagues in the same polytechnic" [10]

D. Revill gives emphasis to this latter comment when he stresses *"The whole institution faces the need to develop a corporate identity. The library needs to do so too within the institute"* [11]

THE MANAGEMENT DILEMMA

It is to this fundamental problem that Professor Ashworth turned his attention, and perception, after being appointed Chief Librarian of the Polytechnic of Central London in 1970.

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10 K. Harris "The polytechnic library explosion" New Library World Sept 1971 p.83

11 D. Revill "Multi-site library problems" New Library World Aug 1975 p.163

As he put it, *"Short of Buckingham Palace going for a song we were stuck with our multi-site, so I had to give a good deal of earnest thought to our problem. I very soon found that as far as the administration of such libraries was concerned I was breaking new ground"*[12]

Ashworth distinguishes between library services which are centralised, but with branches, and those, principally in special and many academic libraries, which are truly multi-site libraries which *"though part of a larger whole, are often working in different subject areas and may have to serve a group of users with different needs"*[13]

His point with regard to this type of library, which is essentially the type of library that will be developed in several Australian amalgamating institutions is that they *"impose maximum strain on the bureaucratic centre-periphery type of organisation"*[14]

The result, according to Ashworth, and which is worth recording in full is that

"One hears the familiar complaints, common to many such situations, that headquarters is slow to take decisions, unresponsive to suggestions, and out of touch with local needs. If the branches take independent action then conformity is eroded and the resulting divergence of policy destroys unity. New conflicts then arise because of differing rules and standards from library to library in the system. Users then have the means to play one branch off against another, thus arousing branch-centred rather than library-centred staff loyalty. The other type of breakdown in the autocratic form of government is sparked off because each difficult problem as it arises is sent higher and higher up the organisation tree in search of a person who will accept the responsibility of decision. Middle management, fearful of making mistakes, passes the buck rather than exercising authority, so staff lower down the scale claim they can only resolve matters if they bypass their immediate seniors and go direct to the top. The chief then becomes overloaded and is forced to redraw the organisation chart more rigidly with stronger rules against bypassing. Thus efficiency is reduced because

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12 W. Ashworth Organising multi-site libraries Library Association 1976 p.1

13 Ibid p.1

14 Ibid p.1

decisions take longer and longer to obtain, especially as there is sometimes a tendency to try to evade personal responsibilities by turning difficult problems over to a "super-person" in the form of a committee. The situation is aggravated wherever some of the middle management are in positions determined by the Peter principle, that is they have risen one step too many and reached the level of their own incompetence. Here motivated by self-preservation, they hold on as inactively as possible" [15]

Consideration of this prospect led Ashworth to the work of T. Burns and G.M. Stalker, who in their book *The Management of Innovation* (London, Tavistock, 1967) suggested a system which they termed "organic" and appropriate to changing conditions which require action on matters where there are no copybook rules. This system is paraphrased by Ashworth as *"seeking to develop a common culture a manner of dealing with people and problems and of making judgements which is the 'way' of the organisation. Thus decision can be made at varying levels in the organisation and no one need fear to make them because the ground rules, if well defined and widely known, should create a uniformity in decision-making independent of the person who actually deals with a particular problem"*[16]

Burns and Stalker's book, which is a standard text in a number of business courses in Australian colleges, is based on twenty studies in British industry and the consequences of new and unfamiliar tasks being placed on industrial careers organised for relatively stable conditions.

The authors in the preface to the second edition contend that *"If the form of management is properly to be seen as dependent on the situation, the situation is trying to meet the problem that there is no single set of principles for 'good organisation' an ideal type of management system which can serve as a model to which administrative practice should, or could in time, approximate"*

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15 Ibid p.2

16 Ibid p.2

In comparing mechanistic or bureaucratic systems which define, and set boundaries for individuals and organic systems, Burns and Stalker stress that in the latter the boundaries of feasible demands on the individual disappear. This means that the individual must regard himself *"as fully implicated in the discharge of any task appearing over his horizon, as involved not merely in the exercise of a special competence but in commitment to the success of the company's undertakings...."*

The view that management is a dependent variable, affected by changes in extrinsic factors, has not impacted much on library organisation, although one suspects that the more dynamic libraries in Australia and elsewhere have increasingly learnt part of the lesson. This is confirmed by a statement in a September 1981 internal discussion paper prepared by P. Crook and M. Dawes, Principal Librarians of the North Brisbane and Mt. Gravatt Colleges of Advanced Education. They write *"We are concerned that staff involved have not had the opportunity to realistically consider the advantages and disadvantages of alternative structures. Most of us have spent our lives working within traditional systems. The reaction is, quite apparently - and on a remarkably wide basis - that when faced with amalgamation there is only one possible workable structural solution: there must be centralised decision-making and a hierarchical structure. It may be that this is the solution to be preferred for our resource centre - particularly if staff expect and want it, and senior management consider it is the only one they can support. Nevertheless, there is mounting evidence in the literature that traditional organisational systems are not particularly nice places to work in, especially for those further down the hierarchical scale, and that traditional systems may not be providing the greatest efficiency or resulting in the greatest productivity. It would, therefore, be very sad if we did not use this opportunity to at least weigh carefully the possible benefits of organising ourselves along less traditional lines "*[17]

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17 P. Crook and M. Dawes Position paper on library/resource management. Sept 1981 p.5

In summary Burns and Stalker define the organic form of management as characterised by

(a) the contributive nature of special knowledge and experience to the common task of the concern
(b) the 'realistic' nature of the individual task, which is seen as set by the total situation of the concern
(c) the adjustment and continual re-definition of individual tasks through interaction with others
(d) the shedding of 'responsibility' as a limited field of rights, obligations and methods. (Problems may not be posted upwards, downwards or sideways as being someone else's responsibility)
(e) the spread of commitment to the concern beyond any technical definition
(f) a network structure of control, authority, and communication. The sanctions which apply to the individual's conduct in his working role derive more from presumed community of interest with the rest of the working organisation in the survival and growth of the firm, and less from a contractual relationship between himself and a non-personal corporation, represented for him by an immediate superior
(g) omniscience no longer imputed to the head of the concern; knowledge about the technical or commercial nature of the here and now task may be located anywhere in the network; this location becoming the ad hoc centre of control authority and communication
(h) a lateral rather than a vertical direction of communication through the organisation, communication between people of different rank, also, resembling consultation rather than command
(i) a content of communication which consists of information and advice rather than instructions and decisions
(j) commitment to the concern's tasks and to the 'technological ethos' of material progress and expansion is more highly valued than loyalty and obedience
(k) importance and prestige attach to affiliations and expertise valid in the industrial and commercial milieux external to the firm

Ashworth stresses that while organic systems are not strongly hierarchical they can still operate within a superimposed staff grading structure, provided it is understood that the lead in making joint decisions will generally be taken by the person who, on the occasion, proves to be most informed and capable. 'Pecking order' in the parent organisation is thus far less

relevant under organic than under the more usual mechanistic control.

The role of the Chief Librarian, and the reason why there must be one, is as vital under organic control as it is under a rigid mechanistic system. As Ashworth says, the role of the Chief Librarian is not, as it is in mechanistic control

".... to behave as if he were omniscient. Rather his deep and extensive professional experience should enable him to recognise the critical factors in a situation. He will pilot his staff so that they become sensitive to potential snags in the solutions they choose to be problems they meet. It is his <u>way</u> of handling situations which permeates and becomes the policy style of the library" [18]

Clearly the concept of an organic system applies as equally to an amalgamating college itself as it does to the library-service of such a college. Ashworth draws attention to the difficulty of operating organic library control in a parent organisation which is strongly hierarchical in character. He is also not unrealistic about the problem of introducing such a concept to individual librarians who *"have come to like the comfort of knowing-where-we-stand"* and *"Worse still... seem actively to enjoy hierarchy... and, if low in the pecking order, live for the day when they too will be peckers"*

D. Revill, Librarian of Liverpool Polytechnic, who has also considered multi-site library problems, adds professional confirmation to Ashworth's points. He draws attention to Burns and Stalker's statement that

"The firms which absorb innovation best have practically scrapped the rules about organisation charts. They do see to it that people know one another in a personal sense; but they are not put out if several people seem to be doing the same job, if no one is quite sure who his boss is, if policy is changed unpredictably, and no one is officially told about it"

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18 W. Ashworth Op.cit. p.4

This, says Revill, is *"On the surface... a denial of all the management teaching one has ever experienced, and a recipe for chaos"*

However, as Burns and Stalker comment, an organisation of this type *"flows through, over and round obstacles which would halt a tidier kind of organisation... It also uses men better - those who don't like it leave it... those who stay are thrown into situations of responsibility, they strive to cope..."*

In conclusion Revill observes that *"Reserving one's options and preserving an organic approach to management problems may have distinct advantages"*[19]

PROBLEMS OF MULTI-SITE LIBRARIES

There are a number of already identifiable problems associated with multi-site libraries. Rating as the major problem and probably the only factor of equal concern to college administrator and librarian is the extra cost, because as Ashworth and other writers say "Multi-site working is without doubt economically disadvantageous".

The difficulty is to determine to what extent multi-site operations are more expensive than monosite operations. However costs can be broken into a number of areas

* STAFFING. Ashworth attributes the high cost of staffing to
  - (a) The necessity to provide staff at all service points throughout the long hours of opening of academic libraries
  - (b) The high vulnerability of a divided staff in holiday and sickness conditions. In Australia this is compounded by the generous provision for maternity and long-service leave. B. Southwell Librarian of Melbourne's Monash University alludes to this in the context of university branch libraries when he writes:

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19 D. Revill Op.cit. p.162

"What advantage to the user do we claim for the branch as against the departmental library... One advantage is, of course, inherent in the central control of staffing : that dreadful moment when every member of the branch is on jury duty, having a baby or a nervous breakdown, taking long-service leave or his cumulated flexi-hours, or just simply missing, can be possibly covered by temporary transfers within a wider establishment such as an integrated library system can provide"[20]

(c) The necessity to provide a sufficiently high level of professional expertise at each site to allow immediate decision-making authority, leading to a generally higher professional level than would otherwise be needed

(d) The inability to fully use the expertise of staff members on matters of general importance. They cannot, for example, readily meet for effective interplay of ideas

* RESOURCES. This, although not to be ignored, is apparently not the major cost-factor that might be assumed.

Ashworth quotes investigations made by the Council of Library Resources in the University of London and in the Sheffield and Newcastle co-operative systems that suggest that the duplication of library materials between sites is a less important factor than had been believed. This possibly derives from the fact that different librarians and academics tend to choose different books on the same subject.

Clearly, of rather more concern in these days of escalating periodical subscriptions and reference tools that may cost in excess of $1000 per item, is the cost of providing them on several sites. This, as Ashworth points out can be a major cost unless agreement is reached between site librarians to reduce multiple buying to the absolute minimum.

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20 B. Southwell "Branch libraries - the university librarian's view" Australian Academic and Research Libraries March 1981 p.7

M. Cameron, Chief Librarian of Deakin University considers that, in support of this, a major problem in her experience of amalgamating libraries was *"the very time consuming problem of rationalising serial subscriptions"* (letter to writer 15 Sept 1981).

As another example, J. O'Brien in the 1980 Annual Report of the Kuring-gai College of Advanced Education library notes the high cost of providing legal loose-leaf services on the two sites of the college.

* EQUIPMENT. This is, according to Ashworth, a significant factor because the cost of equipping all site libraries with photocopiers, microfilm readers, VDU's, security systems etc must be far higher than the cost of adequately equipping a single-site library. This writer noted in the report of his 1976 study, in discussing security systems, that *"one library was planning progressive installations in most of its eight site libraries - highlighting just one aspect of the greater cost of multi-site libraries"*[21]

  This is particularly wasteful when it is realised that much equipment in single-site libraries has to be provided, but is in reality used only infrequently. It is probably true that very little equipment in libraries or educational institutions generally, actually wears out through constant use. More problems occur with equipment due to under-use and lack of systematic maintenance.

  In Australian amalgamating institutions today it is clear that much equipment has already been purchased, although with some, as with the proposed Victoria College, there will be problems such as lack of standardisation with their expensive security systems. The problems will come when equipment has to be replaced or when a new item of equipment, such as a superior VDU for online bibliographic searching, becomes available, and every library in the system has to be supplied with one. Unfortunately, it will not work to suggest, for example that an academic based at Site A, should drive 15 kilometres to Site B to have an online search, or a hard-copy of a microfiche made for him.

21 A. Bundy Op.cit. p.28

* COMMUNICATION

The provision of courier services, particularly if a library is to have its independent transport,as may well be needed,must add to the cost of multi-site library operation. Time wastage can also be costed, not just in direct travelling.

At the human level of communication as Ashworth says *"Communication between multi-site libraries must still be registered as an unsolved and perhaps insoluble problem. Meetings, newsletters, social events, intersite working parties - they have all been tried and do but scratch the surface. Clearly all these ploys consume time and therefore resources, reducing efficiency as they improve effectiveness. With the best of intentions to drive him how, for example, can a Chief Librarian show his face in everyone of his libraries sufficiently often for his staff to get to know him (and the converse) while still being an effective departmental head and carrying on public relations and professional duties outside the organisation?"* [22]

* LAYOUT

Although it is not likely to present such a problem in Australian colleges, a number of which have fairly new purpose-designed libraries, Ashworth also draws attention to the disadvantageous economics of multi-site libraries arising from poor layout.

His basic point is that large buildings, all other things being equal, tend to be less wasteful of space, and energy requirements for lighting, cooling and heating. Multi-site libraries, he contends *"with a high perimeter-to-area ratio, present the worst possible conditions for effective design"*

It is thus difficult to avoid the conclusion that several factors, but particularly staffing, make multi-site libraries more expensive than single-site libraries. To assert as such is probably labouring the obvious, but the

22 W. Ashworth Op.cit p.9

point needs to be made because as Revill points out in unusually restrained words

"Unfortunately resources over and above those thought adequate for a single site are seldom provided. Comparisons are usually made with overall polytechnic means while ignoring the need to keep sites staffed" [23]

Nor is it particularly easy to provide hard facts to underpin the need for additional staffing and funding for multi-site libraries. However Ashworth says that *"Such a figure for the extra staff cost of multi-site working for a given library could be calculated and shown to be within a sufficiently close range of accuracy to support a case for additional funding to offset wastage... it has been possible to qualify, without too much guesswork, the advantages derivable by combining two sites, and obviously this calculation could be extended further"* [24]

This is confirmed by a comment in this writer's report of his 1976 study of polytechnics

"An assessment of staffing levels is complicated by the multi-site operation of most of the polytechnic libraries, which adds considerably to their operating costs. For example, one library considered its staff could be reduced from 48 to 36 if the library did not operate on several sites" [25]

ADVANTAGES OF MULTI-SITE LIBRARIES

Ashworth and Revill attempt, but with little real conviction one feels, to demonstrate the advantages to the user of multi-site libraries. These advantages centre on the smaller size, easier atmosphere and less 'off-putting' and closer relationship with library staff. This point is made by the Librarian of the University of Western Australia. In writing about the branch library system at the University,A. Ellis in his 1980 Annual Report comments that

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23 D. Revill Op.cit p.162

24 W. Ashworth "The multi-site dilemma" Journal of Librarianship Jan. 1980 p.9

25 A. Bundy Op.cit p.26

"Although this is a comparatively expensive form of organisation it does have the virtue of providing service where it is needed and enabling close working relationships to be built and maintained between library staff and their specialist users"
There is certainly no doubt that very large academic libraries can be very daunting places for undergraduate students to use. However in looking at amalgamating Australian institutions it does not seem that if all libraries were consolidated on one site that they would present this kind of problem for users. It is doubtful if many of the libraries will achieve a total of more than 500,000 volumes for some years. That, by comparison with major academic libraries, is quite small.

More relevant perhaps is that multi-site libraries may facilitate communication between library staff and users particularly if the amalgamating Australian libraries continue to fail to establish a system of subject librarians, a system now largely established in the polytechnics.

Given a continuation of that failure then multi-site libraries may in part compensate. As Ashworth says
"The conditions lead to a closer relationship with the library staff and this can facilitate the setting up of information services and a better knowledge of the users' needs. Book selection is more accurate, instruction in use of sources of information can be better tailored to needs and there can be much closer contact with course committees for integration between self-learning in the library, and the syllabus" [26]

Revill also notes these points but concludes by observing
".... it is often more difficult to provide specialist staff, to offer a variety of publications, current awareness services, tuition in library use etc. As a consequence it is all too easy to find oneself in a situation where the day to day routine gets done, the technical processes of librarianship are adequately performed but the capacity to extend one's users' expectations is limited"

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26 W. Ashworth "The multi-site dilemma" p.9

Revill relates these aspects to his own experience at Liverpool Polytechnic, and Ashworth's view that 10 was the critical number of staff for a site. He writes

"This accords with our own experience where a library seems able to reach a kind of 'take-off' above this number. We are very aware that 47 full-time equivalent staff when spread over the library services bears no comparison to the deployment of that same number in a single site" [27]

MULTI-SITE OPERATION : A LAST WORD

The last word about multi-site operation is appropriately Ashworth's *"The part advantage/part disadvantage characteristic of multi-site working is an inherent feature and, at every turn, comparisons have to be made to achieve what is best for users. It is interesting and challenging work. Nonetheless it must be admitted that, on economic grounds, the overwhelming advantage, both in material and staff costs for equivalent services, lies with the single-site academic libraries. Accordingly one must recommend that those academic libraries which are fortunate enough to have few sites should fight hard to resist adding to their number, whereas those with many sites should work constantly to reduce their number..... In doing so, much academic pressure may have to be overcome, because faculty and departmental libraries are extremely popular with the teaching staff... It is therefore vital that chief librarians of multi-site libraries should as soon as possible, gain acceptance for... a firm policy intention towards the achievement of a single-site library or at least a reduction in the number of service points"* [28]

The spectre of demand for multi-site/departmental libraries for academic convenience is not unknown to Australian libraries. What is new is an environment that will make it difficult to avoid that situation.

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27 D. Revill Op.cit p.162

28 W. Ashworth "The multi-site dilemma" p.13

CONCLUSIONS

In one major respect Australian libraries, because of advances in computerised bibliographic control in the past decade and greater standardisation of cataloguing and classification practices, are better placed than the polytechnic libraries were in their initial amalgamations.

The amalgamating libraries in Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales are in the main using cataloguing co-operatives such as CAVAL, SAENET and CLANN, and those libraries such as Sydney Teachers'College which have remained outside co-operatives will have little option now but to join one.

This is a very big plus for the Australian co-operatives, which have facilitated the implementation of MARC based microfiche catalogues in quite small college libraries, and made much easier the amalgamation of bookstocks. Without them amalgamation for college libraries would have been a much darker picture. As M. Cameron, Chief Librarian at Deakin University notes about the problems at Deakin *"The situation here has been vastly complicated by the way the separate libraries have continued as branches and by the different cataloguing and classification practices in the predecessor institutions. Amalgamating the CAVAL libraries, will be a vastly different proposition"* (letter to the writer Sept 1981). CAVAL, in Victoria at least, has also facilitated the development of direct reciprocal student and staff borrowing between colleges, so that aspect of amalgamation will also not be as difficult as it might have been.

Even in a state such as Western Australia where no formal network for automated cataloguing exists as yet, the amalgamating colleges have been maintaining a union catalogue between themselves and facilitating reciprocal borrowing and courier services.

Thus the problems of reconciling the editions of Dewey and the edition of the cataloguing rules which are in use by individual libraries does not loom large. Most will already be using Dewey 19, AACR2, Library of Congress Subject Headings and dictionary catalogues. The major problem in amalgamated colleges will be the editing of collections and the retrospective conversion of cataloguing records - aspects which should proceed hand-in-hand.

However, if at a bibliographic level the Australian libraries will not have problems as large as they might have been, at an operational level a number will have problems, particularly in respect to accommodation.

It seems unlikely that this will be resolved by the construction of many new library buildings in the foreseeable future. This means that even with weeding of collections, and some reduction of staff, in Victoria the Burwood, Rusden and particularly the Prahran site of the proposed Victoria College will have problems, and the Preston Institute, Coburg State College merger,whilst having the benefit of the new library at Coburg,will not escape the need for the new library at Preston.

Other states have similar problems of lack of balance in library accommodation which may be a factor in the teaching activity on each site. In South Australia, whilst the Underdale and Sturt sites have no major problem, the city, Hartley and Salisbury sites clearly do have some space problems.

In Western Australia,Churchlands has a major problem which may be alleviated by 1984 with enough space for centralised technical services for the new college, and space is also a problem at Nedlands and Mt. Lawley. Only the Claremont site, with its new library,does not have a major problem, and it is ironic that the Claremont site is the one most eligible for closure.

In Queensland there are new library buildings at North Brisbane, Mt. Gravatt and Kelvin Grove and assuming the closure of Kindergarten site, should have far fewer accommodation problems than in New South Wales where the projected Sydney College of Advanced Education will operate on several sites with poor accommodation, not least in the major site,that of the present Sydney Teachers'College.

Although accommodation and distance will be a major headache for the chief librarians of these amalgamating institutions, the greatest problem by far will be to assert the needs of library-services in institutions where the battle for survival by academic departments courses and individuals will be fought hard and with at times, no doubt,

no concern for commonsense, logic and the common good. It would be naive to pretend otherwise, because it never has been easy to convince individual academics and departments that the library in an institution is unique and does merit special treatment because it is for the whole of an institution, not just a part of it.

The following comment from The Australian Financial Review 14 Oct 1981 is not without basis. In an item on the deterioration in the standard of intellectual honesty in Australian universities it was said:

> The university argument on academic freedom when it comes to public funds is a phony one. There are too many material interests, too much personal interest, as against the abstract principle of free inquiry, involved. It is clear, for example, that university libraries have been starved in recent years to maintain academic salary progression, establishments and study leave. But the library, far more than individual staff members, is the core of a university. If any economies are needed they should come first on the teaching staff side and last of all on the library. Yet the reverse has happened.

The situation in the colleges is not significantly different and 1982 will not be a desirable environment in which to organise and develop a new library-service, but at least it will present a professional challenge that has not been experienced on a large-scale in Australia before.

The irony is that not a few single-site libraries such as La Trobe University which have fought long and fought well against dispersal may soon, through lack of space and lack of money for buildings, face a reality of some form of multi-site operation.

Much of what the Federal Government is "saving" in capital costs for buildings will thus be frittered away through enforced multi-site operation.

The moves to co-operative storage in places such as Adelaide and Melbourne are but a manifestation of the problem of the inexorable growth of most academic libraries, even when their institutions are static. It is a growth which at best can only be moderated, although the level of moderation possible without great harm through improved selection of resources is probably greater than most librarians would willingly admit.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1 The study of the consequences of dispersed library-services cannot be ignored by anyone, and the accumulating Australian experience if recorded through seminars and publications could provide much useful information. It is recommended that Australian librarians in amalgamating institutions record their experiences as fully as possible and publish them.

2 It is recommended that a national seminar should be held during 1982 aimed at the administrators and library staffs of amalgamating institutions. This could be useful in emphasising some of the concerns expressed in this report.

3 It would also seem desirable to check specifically on the progress of libraries in amalgamating institutions. The provision of adequate library-services has never been a particularly demanding requirement in course accreditation in Australia, unlike that of the CNAA in the United Kingdom. With the increased autonomy of colleges, libraries, unfortunately,are likely to be of even less direct importance for accreditation purposes in the future.

A study of what actually occurs in the libraries of amalgamating institutions in 1983, would alert the Tertiary Education Commission and the various State Commissions to any adverse effect on library resources and services.

4 The point was made to the writer on a number of occasions that within the polytechnics only the directorate and the senior library staff have a broad institutional perspective. This tends to reinforce the common interest of both college administrators and librarians in developing a corporate identity for amalgamating colleges.

How best to achieve this in the context of the considerable human, academic and organisational problems would be profitably evaluated by a separate report by an Australian administrator looking at the developments in the polytechnics.

It is therefore recommended that such a study be undertaken by an Australian administrator as soon as possible, and certainly before the end of 1982.

1 Libraries and librarians have a strong tradition of co-operation. They are likely to be ahead of other parts of your college in their willingness to integrate and will have a broader perspective of the new institution than individual academic areas. The library is a tangible and visible way of helping you establish a corporate identity for your new college.

This guideline is generally confirmed by the polytechnic experience.

However in a few cases during the first amalgamations there were some problems from librarians of smaller colleges who were reluctant to integrate as part of a college reluctance to accept amalgamation, and because of the consequences for their own status. As one polytechnic librarian commented *"... some members of teaching staff hope that the pre-merger situation can be preserved in some way quite unforeseen and wish that the pre-merger libraries can be preserved intact against a possible revival. Not everyone sees change as challenging, or wishes to rise to a new challenge".*

One comment received from another polytechnic librarian was that *"A well-planned programme of discussions spread over the pre-merger period are essential to success"* There are several examples in the polytechnics of the librarians in fact taking the initiative and commencing planning well in advance of any co-operation between academic teaching areas. This is what seems to be already happening in the Australian context.

2 Early investment in the integration of the libraries will not only assist in the development of your new institution's corporate identity it is also likely to save additional costs in the long-term.

This guideline is included at the suggestion of M. Cameron, Librarian, Deakin University, because it confirms the polytechnic experience. There is no doubt that the polytechnic libraries that have automated have found that, for example, changes to cataloguing records as a result of transfers of book-stocks are easier and less costly than with manual systems.

It is also of inestimable value to be able to provide on each site a full union record of the monographic, periodical and audiovisual holdings of the whole library.

Other aspects of automation such as a common loans system, for library-staff and library-users undoubtedly have a strong unifying effect, apart from any organisational and economic advantages.

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3 Appoint a Chief Librarian with senior academic status, ex officio membership of the academic board, and other significant committees, and the closest involvement in overall institutional planning, as a priority. Someone will have to make hard decisions and lead - a committee of your inherited site librarians will not and cannot.

At least one group of librarians in amalgamating colleges in Australia has already suggested that the appointment of a chief librarian is not a priority. Although it is understandable that individual librarians who relate well and have co-operated to date would rather keep their own independent status as much as possible, it seems naive to pretend that in the long-term this can work in the political realities of truly amalgamated educational institutions.

The consequence of a lack of a clearly defined leader for the library from the outset can well be extremely damaging to the position and development of a library in a merger situation. This is adequately borne out by the polytechnic experience.

Comments received included

"Our library wasted five years of development before I was appointed"

"You need a benevolent despot initially"

"The library could end up by being managed by a committee of academics with vested interests - even worse than a committee of site librarians"

"The Chief Librarian should be responsible directly to the Chief Executive Officer of the new institution"

"The role of the Chief Librarian is to get the committee of site librarians to make hard decisions and lead"

"Your Chief Librarian must be a political animal and an able administrator and manager. His subject knowledge of books is largely irrelevant at this level He/she must be able to assess the subject competence of staff and inspire them .
It is imperative that he/she is seen within the institution to have appropriate seniority and to enjoy the confidence of the directorate"

"This advice is essential in merger situations"

"No site librarian in our situation took the lead..."

"Students and teaching staff will want consistent services, consistent application of resources. Central control from the outset is essential"

One polytechnic, at least, has other senior library staff at Head of Department status on the Academic Board. This may be worth considering in very large colleges in order to spread the committee load of the Chief Librarian.

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4 Particularly where several colleges are amalgamating an internal appointment as Chief Librarian should be avoided. The position requires a new perspective and dynamic - appoint from outside if at all possible, despite your funding problems.

This view will not, understandably, receive unanimous support from the librarians of Australian amalgamating colleges, although some of the more perceptive have expressed support for it to the writer.

Already, in at least one amalgamating Australian multi-site college, it has been recommended that a college librarian be appointed from among existing senior library staff, albeit with no indication whether the appointee would administer a site library as well as the total library, and with the suggestion that at each site there should be a Head of Library Services responsible to a Site Director.

This seems to be the antithesis of true amalgamation and could well present significant long-term problems particularly when really hard funding and developmental questions have to be resolved between components of the college. It is doubtful if the proposed federal structure for some amalgamating metropolitan institutions in Australia will stand the test of economic reality. Certainly the polytechnics have in general avoided appointing inherited staff to the Chief Librarian's position. As one polytechnic librarian commented

"A new and experienced voice may well be crucial in the merger situation. He/she can bring to the merger a reasonable level of detachment and objectivity"

This view was shared by the polytechnic librarians to whom the writer spoke, not out of self-interest one feels, but because there was a real appreciation of the human management problems that would be faced by an appointee to the position of Chief Librarian from a peer group of former college librarians.

As another polytechnic librarian observed

"Small colleges sometimes appoint well-meaning but weak librarians. Avoid this at all costs. The new amalgamating library will be or will become a large and complex operation.
Students' academic performance is closely bound up with the 'output' of the library in quantitative and qualitative terms.

Your choice of a Chief Librarian is one of the most important choices you will make. Look for proven past professional performance together with positive personality traits - enthusiasm, sensitivity to academic need, ability to get on with and be respected by other Heads of Department"

Finally, in the words of an Australian librarian with a major past involvement in an amalgamation

"I think it's probably better all round if the person in charge of an institution which feels it is being swallowed up is no longer around. A general post of college library jobs in Victoria would probably be much less distressing all round than the next few years are going to be. There could be a wholesale exchange within the system and then there would be more people taking a fresh and objective look at both predecessors and amalgamated libraries"

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5 Resist any temptation to use an academic - redundant or otherwise - as a direct supervisor over the site librarians you have inherited. It is unlikely to be successful or save money in the long-term.

Australian colleges may well be faced with the problem of finding useful employment for redundant academics. This point is referred to in the Tertiary Education Commission Report for the 1982-84 Triennium.

It needs to be stressed that the co-ordination and running of a library is a task for a professional librarian. This view was shared without reservation by the librarians and administrators to whom the writer spoke in Britain. In this respect the Council for National Academic Awards Library Provision in Colleges of Education statement on library leadership is relevant:

"The effectiveness of a college library depends to a large extent on the personality, drive and professional skills of the librarian. The Professional skills of the head of the college service no less than the service as a whole need to be judged in the light of good current library practice, and the visiting party will be interested in the management ability, areas of special skill or interest, local or national professional activities and academic and professional qualifications of the person concerned.... the librarian should have a standing in the college appropriate to his/her academic and professional responsibilities. This should be reflected in the salary and conditions of service, membership of the academic board and/or other college policy-making committees and full involvement in any resource allocation machinery"

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6 Establish a small college library committee that is advisory to your Chief Librarian and reports to the Academic Board and is so constituted as to minimise interdepartmental and intersite rivalry. Do not retain or allow to be established strong site library committees - they are a potential source of tension between site and site and site and centre, which will not help you establish a corporate identity for your institution.

Professor Ashworth suggests that this is a matter requiring some care. His view was strongly supported by the majority of polytechnic librarians.

Some however considered that it was very useful to have user committees or groups representing departments or sites, for communication purposes, and as one librarian put it *"to discover 'grassroot' opinions over the widest possible span of courses and departments"*

An Australian librarian involved in an amalgamation commented *"The college library committee should be established early, and I would suggest that the time to involve it is when the hard decisions have been made, but before they have been implemented"*

There was an alternative viewpoint that these local committees should not, in fact, be established *"until after implementation of the initial hard decisions"*. The major point about committees is,as Ashworth says *"Everything, of course, depends on the underlying reason for the user's wish for policy participation. It is perfectly proper, indeed necessary, that decisions on policy should be taken only in the light of user needs and knowledge of user preferences. Where, however, academics believe that they, and they alone, have the ability to make judgements on matters like allocation of funds, book selection, or the organisation of information then there will be conflict with the professional knowledge and experience of library staff"*

7. Multi-site libraries are at least 5% per site library more expensive than physically consolidated libraries. Staffing will be the main additional cost. There will also be higher resource and equipment costs. If a site can be closed, do not overlook the advantage to the library and your budget.

No one to date has undertaken a comprehensive assessment of the cost of multi-site operations for libraries. Professor Ashworth's view that it is a minimum of 5% was regarded by many polytechnic librarians as very conservative, with the real costs likely to be considerably higher. Comments received included

"I have always argued that with six major sites we are 25% more expensive to run than a single-site library... this is not fully recognised by the administration"

"5% is an understatement... Duplication of resources is costly; equipment can be worse especially if there is a lot of microform. If you don't duplicate resources, readers have to commute from site to site which is wasteful and costly in time; you have to run courier services for inter-branch loans; and readers do without more often than is educationally desirable" (an Australian librarian)

"I would like to think that 5% is a modest estimate when all the factors involved are considered"
"25% would be nearer - taking into account duplicated stocks, issue and security equipment, staff and premises"

"5% seems a very conservative estimate"

"I'd say at least 10%-20%. We are currently planning to reduce 6 sites to 4"

An Australian librarian commented *"Several months ago I reviewed certain aspects of our library organisation, to which the issue of multi-site operation was essential. From this study it was clear that multi-site operation is more expensive than single-site operation"*

As well the emphasis on the higher cost of multi-site libraries, several polytechnic librarians stressed that it was indefensible to close a site library without the entire site being closed. In one librarian's words *"There will always be a need for on site facilities if there is more than one campus"*

8 Removing a proportion of students, staff and resources from one site does not result in proportionate savings in library operations. Each site library needs a certain minimum of staff to provide services and access.

Professor Ashworth considers that 10 is the minimum number of staff to provide proper services and to ensure that staff have some opportunity to work constructively at the educational role of the library.

Whilst there was considerable support by the polytechnic librarians for this view, a number stressed that the minimum number depended on variables such as clientele, subjects, bookstock, opening hours. There are clearly some cases of successful site libraries operating in the polytechnics with less than 10 staff.

The point that was stressed was that, regardless of the size of the library, library reader services are, despite automation, labour-intensive. Reductions in staffing below certain levels must inevitably affect (a) services to users (b) the level of job-satisfaction of the library-staff endeavouring to provide these services.

Noted one polytechnic librarian: *"My experience over 25 years is that administrators and academics frequently fail to appreciate the special needs of libraries. The labour-intensive nature of many of the operations in libraries is generally not understocd"*

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9 If you are considering moving the teaching of courses around in your institution it has library implications. Books are expensive to duplicate or transfer; catalogue records require considerable staff, time and money to change.

There was complete support for this guideline. Among the comments were

"The location of a library should reasonably affect the location, relative to it, of departments most dependent on library support"

"The general experience is that the library implications are <u>not</u> taken into account in the initial planning stages"

"This has been a major problem over the last four years and could have been obviated by greater support in the form of temporary staff"

"How true! We have had three summers of re-locations (10,000-30,000) volumes on the move each year. The polytechnic has allowed temporary cataloguing help but the final impact is much greater and long-lasting than the administration realise"

"This is something often completely overlooked by teaching staff and administrators. It cannot be emphasised too often"

"This is accepted by the Polytechnic but in practice other considerations seem to be paramount 'on this occasion' as each occasion arises"

"Agreed... but it may also be important to destroy the former colleges' autonomy and independence by breaking up teaching and moving people. If you don't you can get political problems - folk trying to re-assert their old independence and inter-site conflicts"

"Consultation at a very early stage of any proposed move has proved very worthwhile for us - in some cases aborting plans which looked wholly feasible from the academic viewpoint"

"We suspect that the true cost of altering a cataloguing record is about half of the cost of cataloguing a new book"

"After 14 major library moves and 2 mergers with college of advanced education within 10 years I can't but agree... the lost time is greatly regretted"

"Compact and cohesive groups of subjects are best academically, and most efficient for the library"

The final comment is appropriately from the only Australian library that has recently costed the transfer of books. Prahran College of Advanced Education reports

"In 1980... it cost a total of approximately $1.45 per volume simply to transfer library material for one college to another and make it available at another, at minimum cost and with only the most basic of records. To provide the convenience of an integrated catalogue would require a much higher cost per volume"

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10 Apart from large transfers of books, the library will need frequent and reliable transport between sites for interlibrary loans etc.

It is clear from the polytechnic experience that communication costs are just one of the extra costs of multi-site operation for an entire college. For example, some have been obliged to operate free regular minibus services between sites for students, as well as conventional courier services.

Comments received about library transport needs included

"A twice daily van on polytechnic duties (not a dedicated library van) has proved very successful here"

"It is important that the library have its own transport or have priority treatment from the college transport department"

"The college must have a good intersite transport system"

"Ensure also that library staff are properly recompensed for travel"

"It is preferable to improve a college's transport service rather than for the library to take on the cost of staff and vehicles"

"This has certainly been borne out in my own experience. Daily inter-site transport is now an established part of the service"

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11 The allocation of funds and selection of resources is the responsibility of your Chief Librarian. Do not let the library become a battleground for funds between teaching staff representing the interests of different sites.

Whilst recognising their ultimate responsibility to the Chief Executive Officer all polytechnic librarians seem to have achieved this position, and support it as a proper part of their senior status in their institutions.

Comments included

"The Director said that the Chief Librarian knew more about the need for books than any other member of the polytechnic top management... the librarian authorises all purchases and takes responsibility... he is not the clerk who transmits orders from lecturer to bookseller"

"This is most important!"

"One wants involvement - teaching staff and students - or a feeling of involvement at least, otherwise suspicion is rife... I present the Library Committee with estimates deriving from meetings of site librarians (who have consulted teaching departments) and we go on from that initiative"

"Adequate mechanisms must be established for library staff to make sensible proposals, and for academics to react to and influence those proposals"

"I agree that the Chief Librarian should have the final say in allocation of funds. However, his decisions will require that library staff and academics adequately feed to him all the relevant facts"

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12. Allow your Chief Librarian to move funds between acquisitions, equipment and staff, particularly during the early stages of amalgamation when college funds may be unable to support adequate acquisitions, services, systems development and staffing. There is no point in buying a large number of books if there is no provision for staff and systems development to process and catalogue them. Your Chief Librarian may need any flexibility you can give in the deployment of funds.

Although in general, because of local authority control, the polytechnic librarians do not have this flexibility, most of them wish they had. It is a flexibility which is more easily achieved in Australian colleges, and already used in a number of them.

Comments included

"I really do agreehere. Flexibility is good in this polytechnic but categorically (and disastrously) does not include staffing due to strictures and controls exercised with great harshness by the Local Authority at a distance. The Library Committee does agree however that funds spent on equipment to help us to do our job better are quite as well-spent as those directed to bookstock"

"Total agreement, but unfortunately not generally allowed in British Polytechnics"

"Very important. One is seldom allowed to achieve the optimal mix of resources"

"I can move funds but not into the staffing area where it is often most needed"

"Very desirable for specific purposes"

GUIDELINES FOR COLLEGE LIBRARIANS : COMMENTARY

1 Read T. Burns and G. Stalker The Management of Innovation, particularly Chapters 3 and 6, and W. Ashworth Organising multi-site libraries.

The management of amalgamating and multi-site libraries requires an alternative to the traditional hierarchical response to be successful. Whilst a few polytechnic librarians expressed reservations about certain aspects of Ashworth's views, there was broad agreement, through experience with the management philosophy expounded and with Ashworth's delineation of multi-site problems.

It is clear however that Ashworth, of necessity, generalises, and that each library service in an amalgamating situation will have its own variables for which individual responses will be appropriate.

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2 Ensure that there has been discussion between comparable staff from the amalgamating libraries before integration is commenced. This should remove confusion and suspicion, and clarify approaches to major issues such as staffing and budgeting.

This guideline was specified by a polytechnic librarian, and in one form or another was expressed by most other polytechnic librarians.

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3 Undertake a conprehensive appraisal of the staff, stock and accommodation of the libraries to be amalgamated. Create a data base for planning decisions. Match these against academic development plans (also often under radical change at the time of amalgamations) and identify problem areas.

Another guideline specified by several polytechnic librarians which makes good sense, and which is already occurring in some of the Australian amalgamating libraries.

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4 Give staff the earliest possible information on their place/role in the new college, and on how that place will be determined. Long periods of uncertainty sap morale.

There are indications that in the polytechnic situation uncertainty has been at times a worse enemy of successful amalgamation than reasonably fast, if not universally popular, decisions and action.

One Australian librarian involved in an amalgamating situation during the past two years confirmed this. He said that he considered that delay in the implementation of his amalgamation had made the process more difficult than it might have been, as well as placing greater strain on the staff involved.

Most people would rather know their future, than be uncertain. In the amalgamating situation hard decisions cannot be avoided indefinitely. As those decisions will often affect staff at all levels it is important, and their right, that they know as early as possible what their role in the amalgamated college is to be.

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5 *You will need a new staff-structure - have it adopted as soon as possible. Do not promote anyone until it is satisfactory.*

Another guideline suggested by a polytechnic librarian that was supported by several others.

Most polytechnic librarians had, or are still experiencing, the problem that is unavoidable in an amalgamating situation of staff who were unable or unwilling to assume institution-wide functions. One comment was

"You will inherit staff you would never have appointed yourself. Others become over-protective of "their" library, and some do not grow with the system from small independent libraries to parts of a large academic library!"

In relation to the development of a staff-structure, a comment that seems desirable, if difficult to achieve even in a larger amalgamated college, was

"Try to ensure that your staff-structure offers promotional prospects for all staff".

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6 Establish inter-site working parties consisting of all levels of staff.

Most polytechnics have, or had, various inter-site working parties aimed at recommending, implementing and communicating library-wide developments. Although in the early days of amalgamations the working parties were not always completely successful because of antagonism to amalgamations, they seem to be an important part of library and corporate identity development.

Several polytechnic librarians stressed that in their experience, these working parties should not be confined to senior staff but should aim to include all levels of staff.

As one polytechnic librarian commented *"The more people that get together the better"*. The cautionary note obviously derived from hard experience, from another polytechnic librarian, was however *"Staff meetings can as easily harden lines of division"*. Or as an Australian librarian commented *"Inter-site working parties can be good but it is sometimes difficult to avoid the casting of aspersions on the policies and practices of each other's former library"*

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7 Document carefully any special arrangements for resource and service provision on particular sites - you may need the evidence later.

Amalgamations can initially result in some unusual compromises for libraries. If any are made by the library for institutional or academic reasons against your judgement, record the circumstances. At least one polytechnic librarian is glad that he did.

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8 Site library user committees may be valuable during the first stages to counteract at the local level misunderstandings and misapprehensions.

Although most polytechnic librarians agreed with Ashworth's apprehension about the negative effect of strong site library committees, some did consider that a form of user committee at the site level was desirable, during the first stage of amalgamation in particular.

Comments included

"Site committees can provide a forum for local problems"

"I feel that the existence of site library committees to discover 'grass root' opinion over the widest possible span of courses and departments is desirable"

"It rather depends on whether the final form of the library is seen as a comprehensive library or federated units"

"There does appear to be a possible role for the site committee, provided the members of the committee are sensitive to their responsibilities to the whole of the new institution. However the reality is that in the polytechnics site library committees have tended to disappear subsequent to the first stage of amalgamation, or meet infrequently"

Perhaps this is because, as one polytechnic librarian stated

"Our structure has site 'library' committees feeding to a small central committee which is a subcommittee of the academic board. It works fairly well - all user committees of this nature tend, I feel, to be ambiguous in their effectiveness"

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9 You willprobably ultimately centralise most technical services for economic reasons.

With two exceptions, the polytechnics have centralised at least some aspects of technical services mainly to facilitate control of acquisitions and cataloguing automation.

However, as one polytechnic librarian noted

"Actually, centralising technical services is no longer a prerequisite - laying down standard systems, classification etc. is. Automation means wider access to working files"

Another observed

"Now that we have online access to cataloguing systems and to internal ordering and financial information data-bases we are decentralising our central technical services in an effort to make our site libraries more quickly responsible to user needs"

It thus seems possible that the development of online cataloguing in particular may reverse the trend to centralise technical services. One advantage of this would be to maximise the staff available at each site to accommodate rosters and absences, albeit at the probable expense of productivity.

Despite this, and despite the fact that as one polytechnic librarian said *"Yes, you may centralise technical services, but you must never stop worrying about the disadvantages"* the economic case, as Ashworth asserts, for centralisation is hard to refute at present.

10 Promote a formal staff development programme as a priority, despite your time and funding constraints.

This has been included as a guideline because it was stressed by several polytechnic librarians as important to the development of a corporate identity, as well as the value to the professional development and morale of the individual staff member.

A major, if largely unvoiced, concern of individual librarians in the Australian amalgamating situation is likely to be the effect of loss of autonomy and funding on their own staff development and conference attendance.

A systematic staff development programme as in operation at Manchester Polytechnic and Central London Polytechnic can more than compensate.

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11 Establish a training advisory group with members from all sites, including non-professional staff.

Although not a feature of a large number of polytechnics this concept, which is in operation at places such as Middlesex Polytechnic, seems to be successful in its practical effect and as another way of consolidating corporate identity.

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12 Encourage establishment of peer groups with similar interests within the library system.

This is another method used in some polytechnics, apparently with success, to enhance a feeling of belonging to one institution. These groups are usually informally constituted and are advisory to the Chief Librarian.

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13 The new larger library has greater scope to undertake professional initiatives such as special collections, seminars, publications and projects that will help consolidate the college and the library's corporate identity. Do not defer them because of your early organisational and funding problems.

There was general and strong support for this guideline as a contribution to the development of a corporate identity and the strengthening of staff morale as well as the professional value of such initiatives.

Comments included

"I wish we had paid more attention to this"

"A great deal of effort must be put into this aspect of management"

"I'd exclude research proper during early years"

"This should be the responsibility of interest groups for subject areas"

The proper cautionary note was *"I would support this but only if staff and resources are available to do it well. Bad results affect morale and if a demand is created which cannot be met a bad image is created"*

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14 Do not overlook the psychological impact on users and library staff of those tangible aspects that will declare the corporate nature of the new library. Examples can be as cheap as a common library-guide or as expensive as a shared automated loans system.

Comments included

"It is important to present a corporate image through the more tangible manifestations"

"There should be sound overall elements indicating unity but local areas should not be discouraged. We have an overall guide and then local site ones in something like the same format"

In reference to the library-guide one Australian librarian commented

"Also, fortunately, a fairly cheap project, except that it involves decisions about reader service policies which can take a long time"

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15 Involve the whole library in an automated cataloguing system with fiche or online catalogues as soon as possible. This will facilitate the transfer between sites of book-stocks as well as helping the library's corporate identity.

Although many of the polytechnic libraries, as in Australia, have moved in this direction, and agree about its importance, several disagree. Comments in favour included.

"This will be the only way to achieve what used to be a 'union catalogue'"

"Aggregation of catalogues probably necessitates networking anyhow"

"You will have to do it sometime"

"If only I could!"

"Yes, the easiest and best way to establish union catalogues"

"Yes, get your feet wet. Start early while the mood is on you and you are still relatively small"

The contrary viewpoint was represented by

"May not be cost-effective"

"Not without snags. Be circumspect before tying yourself to an external system"

"This is indicative of a press-on-regardless attitude based on an assumption that such features are always necessary. I'd say do this when existing systems are under strain or clearly uneconomic"

"But go carefully - cooperatives can reduce a library's flexibility in determining its priorities. However, in-house cataloguing is so expensive in staff time you will probably have to join one"

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16 Introduce standard loans, penalties, procedures between sites as far as possible and as quickly as possible.

There was strong support for this concept but with a number of qualifications, usually about the possible need to vary loan periods.

Comments included

"This reflects a corporate identity and promotes equal access for all in the new institutions"

"This is essential if stock, students and library staff are to be transferred between sites"

"We have sought to evolve a 'common approach' to such procedures but fundamental differences between sites e.g. computerisation, sometimes dictate that some procedures must differ"

"Procedures yes, penalties yes, loans not necessarily"

"Fine Art students do not necessarily need books for the same length of time as Electrical Engineers"

"If there are strong reasons for differences it is fatal to override them in favour of a concept of standardisation. This would be imposing an ideal and squeezing it around to make fit readily - always a mistake"

An additional useful point made by an Australian librarian was

"Try to decide on the most generous policies from the previous institutions, but remember that this is your only chance to take a tough decision to eliminate any inherited over-generosity".

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17 Allow all users immediate borrowing access to all sites, even at the risk of overloading a particular site.

This received strong support from most polytechnic librarians.

Comments included

"Absolutely essential. Should be backed by clear general guides/ information on what one has on all sites"

"Yes, otherwise protectionism sets in"

"You will get strong opposition from certain sites, particularly smaller ones, which must be resisted".

An Australian librarian commented *"Vitally important. If one site is overloaded, transfer a staff member. The biggest site will probably need the longest hours"*

For most Australian amalgamated colleges, this guideline is unlikely to be a major problem to implement due to the development of reciprocal borrowing schemes in several states in the past three years.

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18 Avoid any reduction in hours and services on individual sites during the first stage of amalgamation. Such reductions can only provide ammunition for disenchanted academics and make the life of the Directorate of the College even harder. The library may be in the firing line for no other reason than that it is tangible as a release mechanism for staff resentful about amalgamation.

There was general agreement about the political wisdom of this guideline. In the words of one polytechnic librarian *"The library could well be the focus for expression of discontent by academic staff about the general effect of the merger"*

Other comments included

"I agree that you should start off with the best possible hours, and let use determine the pattern of reductions if any"

"If you try to improve hours and services on sites you will get strong opposition from some. Expect comments like 'we have tried it already but it doesn't work'"

This point is particularly relevant for most of the Australian amalgamations. The teachers' colleges on which they will be based, despite relatively generous staffing levels in their libraries, have restricted opening hours compared with other colleges and universities. Few, for example, open before 8.30am or after 9pm, or provide any regular weekend and public holiday opening.

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19 To ensure the maintenance of services you will need staffing reserves in the system. Your site libraries will not have the same capacity as when they were autonomous to allow for sickness and other absences.

There was general support for the desirability of having some staffing flexibility in the system, despite the difficulty of achieving flexibility and maintaining productivity.

One polytechnic librarian stressed

"Beware of using technical services as a pool of labour. It creates great resentment in technical services staff as the time taken from them cannot be repaid by staff not trained in their procedures, and then they are criticised for not getting new material through fast enough!"

Another polytechnic librarian commented *"The difficulty of balancing a consistent throughput level in Technical Services against the need to provide relief for service points should be made clear to administrators at an early stage"*

That this has been difficult to achieve in the polytechnics was confirmed by another comment *"Sound in principle but often difficult to implement in practice due to staffing constraints at all levels"*

The reality is thus that most polytechnics have no reserves of staffing for site redeployment, and the sites, aware of this, endeavour to cope with often very restricted staffing.

This seems to be taking unfair advantage of the service-ideals and altruism of library-staff, a point mentioned by one polytechnic librarian.

There is no doubt that the centralisation of all or part of technical services contributes to a lower level of staffing in site libraries, placing greater strains on the remaining staff on each site in terms of maintenance of rosters etc.

One advantage thus claimed by two of the polytechnics who have not centralised technical services is that staff at their sites have not needed to be reduced, and that flexibility on each site has been retained.

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20 In addition to the necessary transfers to cover absences, get as many staff as possible to share time between sites. New staff should spend time at each library. It will help corporate identity.

As a concept this received strong support, but with an emphasis on the problems involved in achieving it.

Comments included

"A big mistake I made in 1975"

"Very useful for junior staff if possible, but our only common operation is circulation"

"Not always possible given distances and subject splits"

"In theory, I would agree with this but in practice find it does not work well. Staff become attached to a particular job/service point and are very reluctant to move. This applies mainly to non-professional staff"

".... unfortunately militates against "one-man, one-job",which would improve his efficiency"

"This is the ideal but sometimes distance between sites can inhibit such flexibility"

"Support in principle, but we can't make it work!"

"There are costs in staff travel time and expenses and a danger of staff losing a sense of identification with a particular group of colleagues/users"

"There is a need for wider horizons, but I suggest this is best dealt with if one sets up inter-site visits, meetings, joint training"

"Staff exchanges between sites, visits to other sites, inter-site training sessions, social events all help to weld the corporate identity"

"The only workable split in my opinion is between a site and technical services"

The most systematic form of staff-sharing between sites in fact seems to be that at Manchester Polytechnic, where general professionals spend 50% of their time at a site, and 50% in the centralised and automated technical services.

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21 Be mobile - visit sites regularly and frequently. Let all staff, senior and junior,see that you are available for discussion of problems.

This is a fairly obvious point which in the opinion of several of the polytechnic libraries needs to be emphasised. As one librarian noted *"Apart from perhaps the Director, in my position as Chief Librarian, I visit the sites of this polytechnic more frequently than anyone else, and probably have a broader institutional perspective as a consequence".*

In the larger polytechnics other senior staff, such as the Reader Services librarian also visit sites regularly and frequently.

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22 Selection of resources for a site should be the prerogative of site or subject specialist library staff. However, someone needs to overview the acquisition procedure of the entire library to avoid expensive duplication.

As a concept, this was strongly supported by the polytechnic librarians, and it is what actually occurs in most of the libraries.

Comments included:

"This is highly-developed here, and underwritten after due discussion in the Library Committee"

"Subject demarcations can be agreed. Some rounding-out may be necessary"

"The programme needs to be clearly co-ordinated and publicly articulated"

A few of the polytechnic librarians commented that the major problem in selection for multi-site libraries was in the area of periodical titles. The many libraries in Australia which have had to cancel periodical titles in recent years will be aware of the often irrational reaction of academic staff to such necessary cancellations. One is led to conclude that attempts to minimise the extensive duplication of books between the libraries of amalgamating colleges in Australia will excite the same reaction, if not greater.

That there will be extensive duplication is undeniable. As one Australian librarian commented

"Many of the projected college amalgamations are going to be in real trouble because of overlapping general studies. It is better, more comprehensible, and cheaper if you can say 'all art books go here, all education books there' etc. A central person needs to rule on every duplicated title"

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23 The individual site libraries may have impressive stock figures, but probably have not been edited rigorously for the rubbish, the irrelevant and the duplication they acquired during affluent times. Establish a systematic weeding programme to minimise space problems, catalogue conversion and transfer problems.

In general, the polytechnic librarians agreed that the merger situation will require a thorough examination of bookstocks to ensure relevance. There was some disagrement about what level of priority should be given to this process. One comment was *"This does cost time which may be at a premium"*. Another was *"We weed only when material is absolute rubbish or likely to mislead of offend. Science and technology therefore receive most attention. When space presses we have a real go at stocks everywhere of course"*

Other comments included

"Heart-felt support!"

"Relocation of stock can be a major incentive for this"

"First find out, then act!"

"Weed before combining records or putting records into machine readable form" (an Australian librarian).

"Get site staff and academics to do it together - like throwing away the dummy. If central people do it sites will blame you forever for throwing away valuable material - a buffer store may be a useful compromise. It will then become self-fulfilling - nothing will be borrowed from it".

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24 Do try all the conventional forms of communication such as staff meetings, regular and frequent newsletters, inter-site working parties, social events.

Ashworth correctly points out that *"Communication between multi-site libraries must still be regarded as an unsolved and perhaps insoluble problem".*

Despite this the concensus of polytechnic library opinion is that anything that can assist in communication is worth trying, although in this writer's opinion some of their efforts would have benefited from more systematic attention. Newsletters, for example, were sometimes so irregular or so infrequent as to be of questionnable value.

An Australian librarian commented *"We found newsletters and social events the best".*

But perhaps the best form of communication, as has already been noted, is a Chief Librarian and senior library staff who are prepared to be mobile.

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25 Unity in your new library is ultimately likely to depend on the will of your staff to behave in a professional way. This requires a flexible approach from those staff. This concept will not be easily grasped by all. Your role is to lead them to it.

One librarian commented *"There is considerable reluctance amongst some Chief Librarians to accept this point. It needs to be stressed".*

Most polytechnic librarians seem to, in fact, accept this as the role of a Chief Librarian in an amalgamated and multi-site environment.

Few of them, however, would claim success in producing a truly professional response from all their staff. It is a reality of life that some "professionals" like fixed job-parameters, and cannot or will not respond to challenge and change. They lack the essential qualification for a professional, and it was this factor that led one polytechnic librarian to state that *"In a merging situation <u>everyone</u> should have to apply for their own job".*

As Ashworth observed *"If, to the staff, their work is just a job then multi-site librarianship will be a failure, but if they are professionally motivated then everyone will take steps to produce a unified operation"*

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In the event of difficulty, copies of the above may be obtained from the author.

Also available from the author is a bibliography that will interest college administrators entitled "The Dispersed Institution of Higher Education" compiled by M. Locke of the Centre for Institutional Studies, North East London Polytechnic. This bibliography was brought to the attention of the author by Mr D Lewis, Librarian, Sheffield City Polytechnic

NOTE ON THE AUTHOR

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He has been responsible for a number of national information developments in areas such as sport, recreation, tourism, the Middle East and audiovisual resources. His overseas studies have included one of British polytechnic libraries in 1976 during which he considered the impact of multi-site library operations, and a similar study in October 1981.

His publications include journal articles and monographs such as *Libraries of Melbourne*, *Libraries of Sydney* and the *Directory of Australian Academic Libraries*.